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C.I.A. Refuses Foreign Bids for Anti-Terrorist Help

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By RICHARD BURT

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WASHINGTON, June 24—The Central Intelligence Agency has reportedly refused or delayed a response to several recent foreign requests for help in dealing with terrorist actions, among them the Aldo Moro kidnapping in Italy and the hijacking of a West German airliner.

According to Government officials and members of the House and Senate Intelligence Committees, the C.I.A., in contrast to earlier practice, turned down a request from the Italian Government for a psychiatrist trained in terrorist matters and for sophisticated eavesdropping equipment to help deal with the members of the Red Brigades who kidnapped Mr. Moro, the Christian Democratic leader, in March.

Similarly, the agency was said to have delayed an answer to a West German request for technical assistance in freeing the 86 passengers and crew members aboard a Lufthansa airliner diverted last October to Somalia.

Several officials said that the agency's attitude stemmed from what they described as an exceedingly cautious reading of prevailing legal curbs on the conduct of covert operations and on the provision of aid to foreign police forces. For this situation they blamed the criticism directed at the C.I.A. over its past activities in Chile and elsewhere.

'They're Really Gun-Shy'

"They're really gun-shy over there," a high-ranking Administration official with direct responsibilities for coping with terrorism said of the C.I.A.

Until now, it was noted, the agency had had a long record of close cooperation with foreign police agencies in Western Europe and other parts of the world. It was involved in the establishment of state security services in such countries as Iran and South Korea and made intelligence specialists available to several nations during the 1950's and 1960's.

The current situation as described by officials is indicative of the new problems the Government is confronting in attempting to enhance C.I.A. effectiveness while restricting its ability to intervene in the internal affairs of other nations.

The agency's reaction to the Italian and West German requests is said to have led to strains in relations with intelligence authorities in both countries. It has also generated concern among Administration specialists on terrorism and the Congressional intelligence committees.

Higher Priority Under Carter

The Carter Administration has given a higher priority in intelligence policy to terrorism, and specialists report that the agency has stepped up programs for exchanging information with friendly Governments to ease the problem. But, they say, the agency has avoided a direct role in such cases as a request by West Germany for help last October in removing the doors of a hijacked airliner on the ground at Mogadishu, Somalia, without injuring the passengers inside.

The specialists said that while a reply to the request was delayed in Washington, a West German commando unit, benefiting from British assistance, stormed the airliner and freed the hostages.

In the case of the kidnapping of Mr. Moro, whose body eventually was found in an abandoned car in Rome, the requested surveillance equipment was not provided, but the State Department did make available a psychiatrist trained to deal with terrorists.

Officials said a major factor in the C.I.A.'s decision to turn down the Italian request was the 1974 Hughes-Ryan Amendment, which says that no covert action can be carried out by the agency unless the President makes a "finding" that it is important to national security and reports it to Congress. Under the Administration's new executive order for intelligence operations, the officials said, the agency is permitted to respond only to "international terrorism."

Position Is Charged

They said that at first the Red Brigades were judged to be a domestic Italian terrorist group rather than an international one. But this was reversed shortly before Mr. Moro's body was found, the officials said, adding that a "finding" was made and transmitted to Congress allowing the agency to respond in the event of further attacks by the Red Brigades.

Officials also said that C.I.A. legal experts had argued at the beginning of the

Moro kidnapping that the agency was prohibited from aiding the Italian police by a 1975 amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act, forbidding the use of foreign aid funds to support foreign police activities. Although the amendment was designed to end State Department train-

ing programs for foreign policemen, William E. Colby is said to have promised while he was director of central intelligence that the intelligence establishment would also abide by the legislated restrictions.